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ABSTRACT

Prepared by a group of British Columbia adult educators involved in the administration and delivery of programs, this paper is intended to stimulate thinking concerning adult education policy by soliciting representative input from individuals and community groups. After a brief introduction, the role of each public educational institution, in relation to current adult education, is described. These institutions include school boards, community colleges, vocational schools, British Columbia Institute of Technology, and public universities. Current concerns related to adult education practices are also described and include low priority, inadequate funding, limited co-ordination, lack of assessment, unequal access, inadequate program development, and inadequate counseling. The paper concludes with six basic issues which may be of special interest to educators and citizens in general. (SH)

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Helping to Develop a Provincial Continuing & Community Education Policy



THE GOVERNMENT OF
THE PROVINCE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

A PAPER INVITING PUBLIC RESPONSE

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
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Department of Education
Province of British Columbia

September 1976

An Invitation...

The Department of Education invites you to attend the open meetings on Continuing and Community Education in your area.

The Department recognizes the importance of citizen participation in the educational process, especially in the area of adult education. Continuing and Community Education can meet adult educational program needs only if we receive a representative public response from concerned individuals and community groups throughout the Province.

Hopefully, this background paper offers an understanding of this complex area. The educational ideas in the paper, of course, will form the basis of discussions at the public meetings.

We hope you find "Helping to Develop a Provincial Continuing and Community Education Policy" thought-provoking and well-founded. We encourage you to attend these public meetings, submit briefs, and send your views to the Department.

A schedule of meetings is included on the back pages.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

The Committee is particularly interested in hearing your ideas based on your own experience. The following questions may help you focus on the background paper which follows.

Purposes

1. What is your assessment of adult education in your area? Is it meeting the right needs and serving the right purposes?

Funding

1. At present many adult education programs are offered only if student tuition fees are sufficient to cover instructional costs. Should tuition fees continue to be a major source of revenue or should employers, and governments, assume a greater financial responsibility for adult education?

2. Should all citizens of this Province be entitled to twelve tuition-free years of public education or training?

3. Should Provincial or local funding be used to ensure equality of educational opportunity?

4. Has the cost of programs prevented you or members of your family from participating?

Access

1. Have you, or members of your family, been able to participate?

2. Are there any people in your area who might need special assistance to take advantage of adult education programs?

3. What approaches to program delivery can be taken to improve the number and variety of programs available in non-metropolitan areas?

Co-ordination

1. Are there any aspects of the current adult education programs in your area which could be improved by more co-ordination and co-operation among the agencies which provide them?

2. Is there a need for a co-ordinating mechanism at the provincial level, or should programing be left at the local level?

Program Development

1. Have you ever tried to influence the types of adult education programs which you need? If so, did you have an effect?

2. What is your assessment of the quality of adult education programs in which you have participated?

BACKGROUND

In June, 1976, the Department of Education of the Province of British Columbia created a Provincial Committee to make recommendations to the Minister of Education on continuing and community education policy. The Committee's recommendations, along with recommendations from a Commission on University Programs in Non-Metropolitan Areas and a Commission on Vocational/Technical and Trades Training, will provide guidelines for new post-secondary legislation. Thus, while recognizing the contribution of other government departments and the voluntary sector in the field, the Committee will focus on the continuing and community education activities within the public education system.

Throughout this paper the term adult education is used to include activities often described as continuing and community education, including the adult and community education aspects of the community school.

This is a discussion paper. It has been prepared by a group of British Columbia Adult Educators who are involved in the administration and delivery of programs. The paper attempts to describe the current scene, to identify areas which may need strengthening and to raise questions about future policy. The paper is intended to stimulate thinking, not limit it. It is hoped that those concerned about adult education in British Columbia will avail themselves of this opportunity to comment.

INTRODUCTION

Adult education in British Columbia has changed dramatically in the last twenty years. At one time, it was a relatively small undertaking, concentrated in the extension activities of universities and night school programs which were of a remedial nature for special groups (e.g. new citizens.) It has now grown to a substantial and varied range of courses, programs, training and retaining, involving over 300,000 adults in British Columbia each year. 1.

Adult education represents fresh development for its participants beyond what they might have achieved in the conventional system. For many, the sense of making up for something that should have been accomplished during childhood or youth has gone. Often it is no longer a matter of going back to school but of continuing to learn. 2.

From the individuals' point of view, living and working in today's complex world demands specific knowledge, skills and understanding. Adult education programs enable individuals to learn and develop these abilities as they are required. Such programs also enable people to enrich not only their personal but also their community's life. 3.

There has been a growing awareness, both here and abroad, of the need for increased adult education opportunities. For example, UNESCO is conducting a world-wide discussion of adult education policy development. Comments made to the Task Force on the Community College (1974) and the Commission on University Programs in Non-metropolitan areas (1976) emphasize the need for such services, especially in non-metropolitan areas. The demand is growing so rapidly that soon there will be more adults engaged in formal part and full-time education than youths in the school system. Thus, the opportunity to discuss important issues in this field are welcome. 4.

For purposes of this paper, adult education is defined as those programs of variously organized learning provided for participants over school-leaving age who are engaged in studies of a part-time, short-term or specially contracted nature and for the community as a whole. 5.

One possible way of analyzing existing adult education programs reveals four main areas of emphasis: career-vocational, academic, community and general interest. The following programs are offered through a number of institutions-some institutions being more heavily involved in one program area than in another.

PROGRAMS	CHARACTERISTIC	EXAMPLES
1. Career-Vocational	-post-employment upgrading -part-time, short-term or contracted pre-employment including vocational certification	-continuing professional, technical or vocational -labour education (steward training, etc) -adult basic education (B.T.S.D. etc.)
2. Academic	-preparation for academic credentials	-part-time academic programs -academic upgrading (K-12 and college preparation) -labour education (history, et. al) -adult basic education (Secondary Adult Graduation Programs)
3. Community	-based on civic and social concerns	-community leadership training -public affairs education -community and social development -adult basic education (basic literacy)
4. General	-avocational interest	-arts and crafts -recreational skills -leisure skills -personal development -liberal studies

THE PRESENT SITUATION

School Boards

In some 23 school districts, approximately 11 of which are on the Lower Mainland, school boards provide adult education programs. These boards also contract for additional programs from colleges or universities. In addition, some 43 schools in the Province have been designated by school boards as "community schools" and offer a variety of programs to their communities. At present three school districts in non-metropolitan British Columbia do not provide tax support for adult education. Thus, aside from the occasional college or university program which may be offered on a fee-for-service basis, few, if any, adult education services are offered to people in these three districts. 6.

Funding for school board adult education programs comes from three sources. A grant of $5 per instructional hour (for approved courses) and a small administrative allowance is provided by the Province. The board itself contributes funds from its local tax base and students pay course tuition fees. In the calendar year 1975, the sources of revenue were as follows: 47% from fees, 34% from the Provincial Government, 17% from local taxes, and 2% from the Federal Government. This source of income is quite different from most of the Post-Secondary sectors in which federal funding plays a significant role. 7.

Community Colleges

Presently, community colleges operate adult education programs in all or part of the 14 college regions of the Province. Colleges play a major role in the provision of adult education services in non-metropolitan British Columbia. In a number of rural regions the colleges, in co-operation with the participating school boards, the British Columbia Institute of Technology and the universities, organize services at the local level. In the remainder of non-metropolitan British Columbia, the colleges have responsibility for adult education services in those school districts in which school boards have agreed to have college based services rather than their own. 8.

The colleges provide limited services on a contractual basis to those other districts which have retained their own adult education services. Overall, in some 43 of the 74 school districts in British Columbia, colleges using existing school resources, provide all adult education programs. In five districts, college councils and school boards share responsibility and funding.

Colleges receive one hundred percent Provincial funding for 9.
both part-time and full-time vocational programs. Funding for university credit programs is provided from Provincial and local tax sources on a 60:40 basis. There is no Provincial funding designated specifically for general evening programs. Financial support for these programs is dependent on allocations made from the college budget to that function and from fees from students enrolled in these courses.

Vocational Schools

The Burnaby Vocational School and Haney Educational Centre are 10.
the only vocational schools in the Province which are not affiliated with a community college. In that sense they offer a unique resource to meet the adult education needs in the Province although, as is the case with most other Provincial Institutions, a large portion of its adult education program takes place within the community in which it is located. The institutions offer a variety of trade and other adult education programs, including trade qualification refresher programs, at both on and off-campus locations through their adult education administrative units.

Funding for the adult education program of the vocational schools 11.
is dependent on allocation from the overall budget of the institution plus tuition fees paid by students.

British Columbia Institute of Technology

There are two major components to the adult education program 12.
of the British Columbia Institute of Technology. These include consulting

and programing services for industry and adult education for those who require upgrading or career training in a variety of specialized areas. As an institution with a Province-wide mandate, the British Columbia Institute of Technology, through its Career Programs and Industry Services Divisions, attempts to make its adult education programs available wherever they may be required in the Province. In so doing, the institution works with industrial, professional and paraprofessional organizations in the private sector as well as co-operatively with agencies in the public sector such as community colleges, school boards and government departments.

Funding for the British Columbia Institute of Technology 13.
adult education programs is provided from budget allocations within the institution as well as from contract and student fees. As is the case with the Burnaby Vocational School, the British Columbia Institute of Technology operates on direct Provincial grants with no funds from any local tax source.

Public Universities

Each of the three public universities in British Columbia provides 14.
adult education programs in areas of evening and off-campus credit study, continuing professional education, and general interest non-credit programs. These programs are largely organized through an adult education division or divisions within each of the universities. While it is true that the vast majority of their adult education programs are located within the communities in which the university is located, these institutions do have a Provincial mandate to deliver their resources throughout the Province, and, as such, try to respond to needs that may be expressed by school boards, colleges, special community groups or professional associations regardless of location.

Financial support for university adult education programs is 15.
derived in part from the overall university budget and, to a much

larger extent, from student tuition fees.

Relationships

Each of the public educational institutions has defined for itself, to some extent at least, the role it will play in adult education. The range of courses it offers each year is a reflection of that role, although other factors such as financial resources and the degree of priority it attaches to its adult education work, will also affect the picture. Courses offered at night or through short courses by the universities, the Institute of Technology and the colleges are, to a large extent, determined, or at least strongly influenced, by the programs and role they have developed for daytime offerings. Perhaps to a lesser extent this is also true of the school boards. Community schools, however, have a somewhat different orientation to the adults they serve, and their adult education offerings may be less subject to influence from the programs they offer to children and youth. All of these institutions are engaged in substantial adult education programs and are trying in their own way to be of service to those who wish to continue to learn in their adult life. 16.

Other Agencies

While the Committee's terms of reference call for a focus on adult education in public education institutions, it is recognized that a number of public agencies also play a significant role. Foremost among these are the libraries of the Province. Museums, archives and art galleries also play important roles. Many departments of government — Local, Provincial and Federal — also maintain education, training, funding or information units which serve their employees and specific public groups. Provincial departments such as Agriculture, Health, Human Resources and the Provincial Secretary are four examples of agencies which perform on-going roles in adult education. 17.

Much adult education is also carried out in what might be described as the private sector. This would include training activities 18.

in business and industry, much continuing professional education and programs offered by private commercial and training schools. A great deal of adult education is organized by trade, fraternal and service organizations, the churches, YM-YWCA's and a wide variety of other voluntary associations.

CURRENT CONCERNS

There are a number of concerns related to current adult education practices in British Columbia. The following are problems which any new policy must address if satisfactory provision for the support of adult education in the Province is to be provided. 19.

1. Low Priority

(a) Historically, adult education has been seen as a marginal and low priority activity in the total education system. In the case of the school system, it has developed in institutions which were created primarily for the education of youth. The universities, while concerned about the education of adults, have naturally concentrated their roles in higher education related to academic teaching, professional training and research. The British Columbia Institute of Technology and the vocational schools have emphasized provision of terminal programs designed both to prepare a person for the labour force and to provide a basis for later professional or employment-related study. Even the developing community college system, with its inherent continuing education role, has generally given greater priority to serving full-time students in daytime classes.

(b) Adult education programs often receive the leftover time and energy of instructional staff, and the remainder of the institution's budget and unused space. The part-time student often finds it difficult to get financial aid and student services as compared to the full-time student.

2. Inadequate Funding

(a) With the exception of instruction and administrative grants the Department of Education provides to school boards, the 22.

funding of adult education is accomplished primarily through a combination of student fees and that portion of the budget which is made available by the institutions after other priorities have been satisfied. Present funding discourages the important role of program development and evaluation as well as educational need identification at the community level. Thus the existing approach to funding is inadequate on three counts: first, there is weak overall funding; second, support through student fees biases programing toward what will sell and to those who can pay; and third, funding from Provincial coffers will always be inadequate when it is passed through institutions whose highest priorities are other than adult education.

(b) The foregoing funding problems relate primarily to adult education as it occurs within public institutions. It must also be recognized that within our communities there are a wealth of other agencies such as voluntary organizations, YM and YWCA's, labour and trade associations, and citizen groups which provide a significant number of learning experiences for adults. Current policies and practices do not, except on an ad hoc basis, permit such agencies to receive public support to meet the learning needs of the groups which such organizations can serve best. 23.

3. Limited Co-ordination

(a) Adult education in British Columbia is characterized by an apparent lack of systematic co-ordination among the various public education institutions involved in delivering adult education programs. The adult education function of institutions such as public schools, community colleges, vocational schools, British Columbia Institute of Technology, and the public universities, is not clearly defined in relation to each other. As a result, shared use of resources, 24.

systematic communications and inter-institutional co-operation in the provision of adult education programs has not been encouraged.

(b) The problem of co-ordination in the public sector goes beyond the public educational institutions. Other public agencies, such as libraries, museums and departments of government, such as Provincial Secretary, Labour, Recreation, Health and Human Resources, and the Federal Department of Manpower, are all involved in major adult education programs. However, there is relatively little communication among them with regard to roles and programs. This can lead to unnecessary inter-agency competition for similar client groups and for similar program ends. 25.

(c) A lack of co-ordination at the provincial, regional and local levels has hindered the growth of such enterprises as community schools, local recreation commissions and public library systems. Only when public agencies co-operate at all levels can community education purposes be effectively met. 26.

(d) The matter of co-ordination with and among voluntary agencies must also be addressed. Many pressures and trends in modern society have caused a withering away of voluntary associations and volunteerism. Yet voluntary associations and volunteers have important roles to play in our communities. If volunteerism is to be encouraged, any adult education policy should strengthen and support it in fields in which it is necessary and most effective. 27.

(e) The lack of articulation among the programs currently offered through education institutions presents a variety of problems for students. The student is often frustrated when moving from one stream to another as in the case of 28.

someone in a vocational program wishing to transfer to a university program. Program developers, at the same time, frequently encounter difficulty as they attempt to tap the resources of several institutions in order to satisfy the learning needs of particular client groups.

4. Lack of Assessment

(a) At the provincial, regional and community levels there are no mutually agreed upon criteria to gauge the effectiveness of the adult education enterprise. In the absence of such criteria adult education programers have been forced to rely essentially on market place criteria in order to determine whether or not to offer a given program. 29.

(b.) Some programs appear to have been developed on the basis of the needs of institutions or the instructors within them and not on the needs of students. Yet few resources are applied to the necessary initial process of identifying and assessing educational needs and resources at the community and regional levels. This lack of systematic assessment of both needs and the resources to meet them has made the efficient and effective use of existing resources very difficult. 30.

5. Unequal Access

(a) Access to adult education varies greatly depending upon such factors as: the type and size of community; distance from the programing agency;the priorities of the education institutions; weather conditions in the area; the financial resources of the individual or family; the cultural background of the prospective student; work schedules and family responsibilities; and the attitude and skills of the 31.

individual with respect to the use of existing educational resources.

(b) There are special problems in providing adult education services in non-metropolitan areas. For instance, because of geographic factors, administrative and program delivery costs are often much higher than in urban areas. Potential students are often widely scattered and in the more remote areas, often have lower educational standing than the urban population. There is limited instructional talent available in some rural areas and the costs of in-service training are high. 32.

(c) Unique problems also exist in the field of adult basic education. Many people who lack basic educational skills have a low sense of self-worth. This low self-esteem, coupled with a low level of aspiration, provides little motivation to enter, let alone complete, adult basic education programs. Since the family background of children is an important factor affecting their performance, parents as well as children must be given greater educational opportunities. 33.

(d) While it is true that the funding mechanism for adult education is in part responsible for this inequality of access, the problem also exists because of a lack of alternate delivery systems for other than face-to-face instruction. Alternative approaches to program delivery, which involve media and other distance education methods require further development. For example, existing facilities such as radio, television, cablevision systems and libraries are underutilized, at both provincial and local levels. 34.

6. Inadequate Program Development

The process of program development, as it occurs within some institutions, lacks sensitivity to community needs. In part, this insensitivity may be because of the failure to identify needs at the community level, but it also stems from the fact that many communities are unable to acquire programs from institutions even when needs have been identified. A second aspect of the problem is the absence of guidelines and priorities regarding needs at the provincial level. Many people, while not wanting provincial control of program development, require guidance before an overall social and economic development process can be fully realized. Such guidance will have to recognize the high cost of curriculum development, especially in such program areas as adult basic education and community education projects. 35.

7. Inadequate Counselling

There is no systematic approach to the provision of program counselling services. Many people who need personal or career counselling have difficulty in obtaining it. 36.

We realize that there are other matters of concerns, for example, inadequate training and research. While such concerns affect the quality of programs, they most directly affect professional adult educators and discussion of them has been omitted from this background paper. 37.

ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION

Some of the matters that the Committee is dealing with are complex and technical. The Committee does not expect every citizen to be interested or knowledgeable in every area. Consequently, the following are six basic issues which may be of special interest to educators.

1. A basic question concerns the purposes of adult education. In this context it is necessary to examine the inter-related concerns of both the individual and the society as a whole. The individual engages in adult education to gain self-development, enjoyment, vocational skills and competence in playing such social roles as parent, worker and citizen. From society's point of view, the reasons for developing adequate opportunities for adult education will include the desire for an efficient economy, an effective democratic system and a maximum measure of social justice. If emphasis is focused on the individual, a laissez-faire, pay-as-you-go system is sufficient. On the other hand, if emphasis is placed on the needs of society, then there will presumably be greater concern for development of a co-ordinated system which will meet social needs and priorities. 38.

2. It can be argued that, from the standpoint of organization, the present arrangement of adult education is the most effective for providing the broad range of needed adult education programs and that what is necessary is more adequate funding, a clarification of institutional roles and provincial leadership for the various institutions which provide these programs. 39.

3. Another point of view is that some co-ordination mechanism is required on the basis of geographical areas or population clusters which logically demand an integrated and planned approach to program delivery. Examples of this approach could range from designating the regional community colleges or school boards as the co-ordinating mechanism to the creation of some new entity such as an area council with representation from the various agencies which offer programs. 40.

4. The question of organization at the provincial level in order to provide more effective leadership to adult education in the Province must also be considered. Various alternatives have been suggested, for example: the Department of Education could be asked to play a stronger leadership role, possibly with the assistance of a provincial advisory committee and an inter-departmental committee to ensure co-ordination with the adult education programs of other provincial government departments. Another option would be the establishment of a Council of Adult Education which would function in a similar manner to the Universities Council for purposes of overall development and budget allocation. The creation of a Crown corporation which would assume responsibility for those adult education functions currently housed in the Department of Education has also been suggested. 41.

The concept of a provincial Open College could be developed in concert with existing agencies in order to provide a full range of adult education programs through media-type delivery methods. Such programs could range from adult basic education through to vocational, career and academic transfer programs up to and including the second year. The college would acquire and develop multi-media materials and serve a clientele which, for various reasons, is prevented from participating in the usual programs offered by existing agencies. 42.

5. A view that is strongly supported by administrators and programers in adult education is that an equitable approach to funding is required, regardless of organizational concerns. They feel that provincial money should be clearly designated for adult education purposes and that it should be available to support a broader range of programs than at present. 43.

One way of accomplishing this would be for the Province to develop guidelines for various types of programs. The various agencies would then be free to plan programs accordingly. Another approach could involve the provision of block grants to a designated authority such as an area council, school board, community college, etc. This authority would then be responsible for determining financial support for programs needed in the area. 44.

Yet another option would be to provide designated funds directly to existing agencies with the expectation that programs would be delivered as necessary. 45.

Perhaps more futuristic, but clearly viable, is the idea of providing funding to individuals rather than to institutions or to support particular programs. Inherent in this approach is the notion of paid educational leave which essentially establishes an educational bank account on which the individual may draw at appropriate times and for appropriate purposes. Several forms of paid educational leave already exist in Western Europe whereby contributions come from the individual, and the employer, as well as from senior governments. 46.

6. Issues related to the role of the public in decision-making about adult education programs also deserves consideration. One view would be that while people obviously need to be consulted about programs to be offered, the agencies which are to deliver the programs should make the final decisions. Others would argue that the role of the potential program consumer should be much more dominant. For example, the opportunity to influence policy and financial decisions, as well as to determine programs to be offered in the area, should be developed at the provincial, regional and local levels. 47.

INFORMATION CONCERNING PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS ON CONTINUING AND COMMUNITY EDUCATION

Guidelines for Submission of Briefs:

Briefs are invited from education institutions, private organizations and individuals. It is hoped the following guidelines will be of assistance in preparing a brief. To be included:

1. Name of organization/individual.
2. Address/telephone number.
3. Author or spokesperson.
4. Body of brief.
5. Recommendations.
6. Summary (each brief, if lengthy, should contain a summary page.)

General

While briefs are of great value to Committee members they are not a prerequisite to making oral presentation at public meetings.

Briefs should be submitted to the Chairman of the Committee on Continuing and Community Education, Department of Education, Parliament Buildings, Victoria, British Columbia.

MEETING SCHEDULE

DATE	TOWN	TIME	LOCATION
Monday-Oct. 18	Penticton	7:30 p.m.	Peach Bowl (Apple Rm.) Power and Westminster Ave.
Tuesday-Oct. 19	Salmon Arm	1:00 p.m.	Okanagan College, Salmon Arm Centre, Room #4, Turner Rd.
Tuesday-Oct. 19	Kamloops	7:30 p.m.	Board Room, Cariboo College, Box 860
Wednesday-Oct. 20	Dawson Creek	7:30 p.m.	Staff Dining Lounge, Cook Training Centre, Northern Lights College Box 120
Thursday-Oct. 21	Prince George	7:30 p.m.	Inn of the North, Nechako Room, 770 Brunswick St.
Friday-Oct. 22	Prince Rupert	2:00 p.m.	Northwest Community College, Amante Bldg., 820-3rd Ave. West
Monday-Oct. 25	Cranbrook	10:30 a.m.	East Kootenay Community College, 125-10th Ave. South, Box 850
Monday-Oct. 25	Castlegar	7:30 p.m.	Hi Arrow Arms Motor Hotel, 615-2nd St.,
Tuesday-Oct. 26	Abbotsford	7:30 p.m.	Students Lounge Fraser Valley College 34194 Marshall Road
Wednesday-Oct. 27	Courtenay	1:00 p.m.	Civic Theatre, 456 Cliff Ave.,
Wednesday-Oct. 27	Port Alberni	7:30 p.m.	District Resource Centre, 2349-10th Avenue
Thursday-Oct. 28	Nanaimo	1:00 p.m.	Tally-Ho Hotel, Cavalier Rm. 1 Terminal Avenue

MEETING SCHEDULE
(cont'd.)

DATE	TOWN	TIME	LOCATION
Thursday-Oct. 28	Victoria	7:30 p.m.	Holyrood House, Saltaire Room, 2315 Blanchard St.
Friday-Oct. 29	New Westminster	2:00 p.m.	New Westminster Secondary School, Massey Wing, 835-8th St.
Friday-Oct. 29	New Westminster	7:30 p.m.	New Westminster Secondary School, Library, 835-8th St.
Saturday-Oct. 30	Vancouver	9:00 - 5:00 p.m.	Maritime Museum, 1905 Ogden St.

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